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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the report is to formulate a number of guidelines for policies designed to complement the Regional Plan of Action, adopted in 1983, which serves as the basis for a long-term strategy whose approach focusses on the connection between youth-related activities and the overall regional development picture. The Plan continues to be valid with respect to its identification of serious problems faced by Latin American youth and the policies applicable to resolving those problems; these aspects provide a basis upon which to plan future measures. The report emphasizes those factors which will have a particular impact on the execution of the strategy it sets forth. The guidelines represent an attempt to provide a better means of relating recommendations to immediate developmental problems and suggests priorities and activities to sustain a successful application of the Plan. The report's sections are entitled: "Challenges to be met in the pursuance of the goals and objectives of the regional strategy relating to youth"; "Bases for the orientation of future complementary policies relating to youth"; "Corollaries for the application of the Regional Plan of Action at a time of crisis"; and "Proposed measures complementary to the Plan of Action with regard to the crisis." (TRS)

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Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean

Second Latin American and Caribbean Regional Meeting
for the International Youth Year

Montevideo, 26-30 August 1985

GUIDELINES FOR FUTURE POLICIES TO COMPLEMENT THE REGIONAL PLAN OF ACTION FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN FOR THE INTERNATIONAL YOUTH YEAR

Note by the Secretariat

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/1. Introduction

1. Introduction

1. The Latin American Regional Preparatory Meeting for the International Youth Year, held at San José, Costa Rica, in October 1983, was intended to provide the initial thrust and orientation for a complex series of activities at both the national and regional levels, culminating in the Second Regional Meeting. This meeting will be devoted to assessing the achievements of the Regional Plan of Action for Latin America and the Caribbean for the International Youth Year, which was adopted in 1983 to serve as the basis for a long-term strategy whose basic approach focusses on the connection between youth-related activities and the overall regional development picture. Within this framework, the period following 1985 has been envisaged as a stage of follow-up efforts, application of the policies formulated during the Year, assessment, reformulation and the exchange of experiences

2. In the light of the economic, social and political events which have occurred in the region between 1983 and the present, it can be seen that the original Plan of Action continues to be valid with respect to its identification of the serious problems faced by Latin American and Caribbean youth, its proposal of a long-term regional strategy concerning youth, and the policies that may be applied in order to resolve the problems of young people; all of these aspects provide a basis upon which to plan future measures.

3. Nonetheless, the Plan itself provides for periodic assessments of its long-term schedule, as well as for the establishment of a dynamic and ongoing system for proposing modifications. The research carried out since 1983 on the status, needs and outlooks of young people in various countries of the region,1/ as well as a number of technical studies prepared by ECLAC concerning the manifestations of the current crisis and ways of dealing with it, have brought out certain key dimensions which provide a clearer picture of the nature and scope of future challenges to be met in regard to youth.2/ The purpose of this Note is to formulate a number of guidelines for policies designed to complement the Regional Plan of Action, with emphasis on those factors which will have a particular impact on the execution of the strategy it sets forth. While reaffirming the validity of the strategy put forward in the Regional Plan of Action, the complementary guidelines proposed here represent an attempt to provide a better means of relating its recommendations to the immediate problems of development and, within this framework, to suggest some priority corollaries and to propose complementary activities with a view to the successful and sustained application of the Plan over a prolonged period.

2. Challenges to be met in the pursuance of the goals and objectives of the regional strategy relating to youth

a) Present constraints and future determinants

4. As is known, during the first half of this decade Latin America and the Caribbean were hit by the severest and longest-lasting recession since the 1930s. Moreover, this recession followed upon a long period of sweeping changes in economic and social structures, which were accompanied by significant economic growth rates.

/This expansion

This expansion came to an abrupt halt, and in recent years there has been an increasing deterioration in the living conditions of broad sectors of the population, including large groups of young people, who have been particularly hard hit by the crisis.

5. Up until 1984, the crisis had entailed a drop in real per capita income, which fell back to 1977 levels. In many countries the situation was even worse; over half of them continued to register negative per capita growth rates last year, and in others, real per capita income dropped to levels comparable with those of the early 1970s or even earlier. Open unemployment and underemployment have increased. Urban unemployment levels in most of the countries doubled between 1978 and 1984, and in many cases real wages have decreased approximately 30% during the past two years. Large population groups have lacked even the most basic consumer goods. This deterioration in the living standards of the Latin American and Caribbean population not only has economic implications but also has an effect on the political and social processes in which young people figure as one of the main social actors.

6. The crisis has been so severe that even if the economic growth rate were to make some recovery over a relatively long period of time, the region could only hope for a gradual restitution of some of its achievements, rather than significant increases over the income levels which were reached years ago. Furthermore, internal and external constraints currently pose serious obstacles to the resumption of previous patterns of growth. Some of the internal factors which limit future development are the decrease in domestic savings and investment levels and the gradual obsolescence and insufficient replacement of productive capital. The most immediate example of the external constraints on the region is its overwhelming external debt. What is more, the foreseeable course of the international economy during the next few years appears to offer fewer opportunities to the Latin American and Caribbean countries than in previous decades, in addition to entailing major constraints. The level of external financial resources available to the region will probably be lower. The intensification of technological change, modifications in the composition and structure of international trade, changes in the rules regulating such trade, and growing protectionism have made the former international division of labour obsolete, and it is still not clear what position the Latin American and Caribbean countries will occupy in the new situation which these changes will create.

7. It is important to be aware of the part which long-term structural factors related to the prevailing development style in the region have played in the onset of the crisis. The type of economic and social changes made in the countries of the region gave rise to marked contradictions which had a particularly strong effect on young people as the leading figures in this transition and as the group in which such contradictions reached their height.

8. During the period preceding the crisis, the region as a whole built up its production and technological capacities and demonstrated its great production and export potential. These achievements seem insufficient when they are considered in conjunction with the fact that the region's economic transformation became less self-reliant while its external dependency and vulnerability increased. New

/groups in

groups in the population were able to adopt consumption patterns similar to those of the developed countries, secured access to decision-making levels and gained a share of economic, political and social power. Nevertheless, these groups existed alongside a large majority that had been bypassed and which received no more than a minimal part of the benefits of technical progress. Some modern productive branches and companies achieved a certain degree of integration at both the national and international levels. Linkages were created within the industrial sector and among modern companies in the fields of agriculture, industry and services. Many were incorporated into international trade and financial flows. At the same time, however, peasant family units, urban artisans and large groups of self-employed urban workers continued to have little or no technical and financial connection with the modern sectors.

9. Under these circumstances, incorporation and exclusion, integration and disarticulation, modernization and heterogeneity tend to reproduce themselves, and the coexistence of these elements emerges as one of the most permanent features of the development style, virtually becoming a necessary condition for the operation of the urban/industrial modality in the form in which it has evolved in the region. Indeed, the links among social groups indicate that a relationship exists between change and marginality. Improvements in the living standards of some social groups and the economic advances made by certain sectors have, in part, depended on the limitation of the progress made by others. Thus, for example, food price controls which benefited the low-income strata and other urban sectors reduced the income of the peasant sectors producing the food; similarly, the modernization of one part of the agricultural sector was furthered by the use of manpower supplied by peasants living on small subsistence farms who were available for sporadic work during the harvest.

10. On the other hand, high- and middle-income groups that already followed the consumption patterns of the developed countries managed to maintain those patterns at a certain cost in terms of resources, savings and import capacity; this reduced the amount of resources available for productive investment which could have raised the living standards of marginal sectors. The concentration of investment in products destined for groups whose numbers were limited reduced the effectiveness of investment and slowed down growth. Heterogeneity helped to maintain real wages at low levels, thus increasing the high-income groups' opportunities for consumption and accumulation.

b) The diversity of national situations in the urban-industrial model: a typology of countries and the implications for young people

11. Certainly, the characteristics of the regional development model are to be found in differing degrees in the various countries. In many of them, their effects have been mitigated by such factors as the income from natural resources, the existence of a large enough economy and population to be conducive to economies of scale or, in very basic terms, the existence of a political system which is capable of establishing relatively stable rules in relation to participation and democracy. Moreover, in the period from 1974 to 1980, there was enough external financing to make up for shortages of savings and foreign exchange. Factors such

/as those

as those mentioned above will undoubtedly influence the future evolution of the region's economies, since they will restrict or reinforce tendencies towards heterogeneity. Furthermore, the optimistic view that was taken in the 1970s of the way in which the international economy was functioning made it somewhat easier to tolerate the negative effects of the model in their various specific manifestations in the Latin American and Caribbean societies.

12. In order to gain a better understanding of the complexity and nuances of the regional situation to which future policy guidelines will have to conform, it is necessary to discuss, albeit briefly, some of the key elements that are examined in the newly-prepared diagnosis on youth in relation to the differentiation of the prevailing development style according to the types of societies existing in the region.3/ Within this typology of countries, the specific modalities of incorporation and exclusion, participation and demobilization of youth identified with given social groups and cultural conditions are phenomena of special importance with respect to planning and the adoption of measures relating to young people. In addition to confirming the validity of the various categories of young people identified in the Regional Plan of Action as target groups for specific policies, this typology represents an attempt to establish a more direct connection between the internal differentiations among young people and their experiences in various economic, social and political situations. Looking at the situation from this angle also provides a clear picture of some issues related to the serious problems faced by young people in the mid-1930s. These issues are: the changes in the social and economic structure, social institutions as a possible channel for the integration of young people, consumerism and its impact on youth, the meaning of work as such, the importance of the symbolic dimensions of the fact of being young, and young people's identity as it relates to the social stratification of the region.

13. Those countries in which modernization and insertion in world capitalism came about at an early stage in their history tended to grow slowly and to form "crystallized societies". Other countries, which underwent a rapid transition involving changes in their social structures (with rapid urbanization, radical changes in the distribution of the active population and large increases in educational levels, which might be considered as tantamount to a "social mutation"), came close to the level reached by the above-mentioned countries in terms of modernization indicators. A third group is made up of large countries with high economic growth rates. In these nations, modernization was rapid and unbalanced, and as their predominantly agrarian social structures became urbanized and industrialized, marked dichotomies emerged between their development enclaves and the rest of the country. In other medium-sized and small countries, economic growth was uneven throughout the period from the mid-century onwards. These nations underwent partial modernization which involved major processes of urbanization and integration that were based, in most cases, on segmented socio-cultural configurations stemming from their "colonial" domination, whose effects are still being felt today. Finally, in those generally small countries having the lowest per capita product, where the peasant sector predominates

/and population

and population growth rates are high, the transformation to capitalism has either been confined to very specific focal points or has been coupled with serious social confrontations and a social modernization process that is only just beginning.

14. The experiences of young people have been different in each of the categories of countries discussed above. The characteristics of the country, as defined by these categories, have determined the nature of these experiences and have established patterns of continuity of internal segmentation, as well as varying degrees of integration into the overall society. The greater the continuity of education, income distribution, channels for the participation of the young people of different social groups, etc., the greater the possibility that young people will exhibit shared forms of behaviour and a common identity; this can also occur in societies marked by a high degree of discontinuity, but in these cases it is coupled with large-scale shifts stemming from high economic growth rates and a rapid structural transition. In these cases, young people's identity is based on expectations of individual mobility perceived as a collective rather than a personal process, with the values of the emerging society as a common point of reference.

15. In this last type of society, as well as in those undergoing a transition based on segmented social relationships, the lack of a shared code of communication among the stratified social groups of young people is a decisive factor in the absence of homogeneity. This may be true to such an extent that the validity of the overall concept of young people as a group may be open to question. For example, in some Latin American countries, out of every six young people in the 20-24 age group, one will be illiterate or have no formal schooling and one will have some degree of university or further education, thus indicating that cultural communication among the various strata of young people will be extremely difficult.

16. The lack of education, especially at the primary and secondary levels, not only results in an inadequate degree of integration in social and economic terms, but also has a very detrimental effect on the formation of a citizenry and on people's possibilities of participating fully in politics. This does not necessarily mean that there will be a lack of political communication or an insurmountable ideological segmentation, however. Since the late 1970s, there have been cases in which young people's responses to alternative political, social or economic projects have transcended class considerations and cultural conditions. Such examples of political communication which cuts across different strata of young people seem to be most common, however, in cases where the alternative development proposals reflect shared frustrations or widespread discontent and offer a greater opportunity for change and creativity, as well as giving those involved a feeling that they are taking concerted political action --a basic mechanism for the success of participatory democracy.

17. A common thread running through the wide range of national situations which exist is the fact that the internal sources of the current crisis are marked by a profound lack of co-ordination and long-standing divisions in the social and production spheres of the urban industrial model and by the formation of inequitable

/societies that

societies that have demonstrated the impossibility of expecting democracy to derive automatically from economic growth and modernization. These internal sources are closely linked to the dependent and vulnerable nature of these countries' relations with the central nations and their international insertion. Generally speaking, the style of development has proved to be overly oriented towards imitative consumption and the static introduction of the technology used in developed economies, without a sufficient creative effort being made to adapt consumption patterns or techniques and forms of organization of production to local resources and needs. Financial problems worsened and the external imbalance grew, thus revealing these countries' structural defects. In recent times, all of these phenomena have been coupled with major political and social changes. In some countries, increasing tension has overflowed into violence in which young people have played a leading role. In others, autocratic régimes have made way for elected civil governments, and young people have taken an active part in these changes as well.

18. Most young people, however, have been brought to a feeling of near despair by the crisis, as they find themselves isolated from other generations, with little opportunity for participation, facing a future of unemployment or under-employment, with a poor education which provides no guarantee of either employment or social mobility in a society lacking a clearly-defined model for a future in which they would have a place. Young people are faced with cultural conflicts and a crisis of values created by the dizzying succession and overlapping of three types of society: the rural society, the modern urban society and, now, the "model-less" society. For young people, the fabric of society has been wrenched apart by war, human rights violations, drugs and the consumerist world view transmitted by the mass media, whose influence on young people is ever more decisive.

3. Bases for the orientation of future complementary policies relating to youth

19. It should be noted, in the context of the processes described, that the evolution of economic, political and social events shows that there are multiple functional links existing between them. Hence the improvement of the situation of youth would have to envisage a set of combined and continuing measures. Likewise, within this constellation of processes, it is becoming increasingly evident that future policies and the mechanisms for putting them into practice will have to be selected in the light of the fact that we are living through a time of crisis, and that this is by no means of a transitory nature. As there is now very little room for manoeuvre in respect of resources, certain concepts are becoming more and more decisive: namely, creativity, participation, concertation and autonomy in the economic, social, political and cultural spheres of the countries of the region, as requisites for carrying forward the strategy announced in the Regional Plan of Action.

20. Now more than ever grave doubts are expressed as to the destiny of the Latin American and the Caribbean societies. The continuance of the present development model can only lead, in most cases, to a slow and unstable economic growth with contradictory features, which will imply the persistence of the obstacles to the

/incorporation of

incorporation of a large part of the population into the market as producer and consumer, and the impossibility of integrating the production and consumption circuits to ensure an autonomous development which will be viable and socially equitable.

21. What is required, therefore, is a reorientation of the Latin American and Caribbean development which will not be a repetition of stages previous to the crisis and which will be based on autonomy in the formulation and application of new development styles centred on human needs, participation and solidarity. The construction of these new models will depend, basically, on the full participation of the new generations.

22. The regional strategy agreed in relation to youth will only be able to be put into practice if the countries of the region tackle three apparently irreconcilable processes simultaneously: stabilization, reactivation and structural change. The primary challenge seems to be the imperative need to reconcile these tasks, an undertaking which tends to erase the dividing line between short- and medium-term policies since, in view of the nature and depth of the crisis, there can be no delay in embarking on the structural reforms needed to achieve a genuine solution to the problems of the crisis.

23. For the moment, and in the context of the stabilization of inflation and the forms of renegotiation of the foreign debt, the problem is expressed in very concrete terms: that is, jobs, educational and training possibilities, health, social services and housing for millions of young people. To undertake them signifies at the same time to find solutions for the great problems of the future. It is essential, therefore, to find a better approach to the persistent traits of heterogeneity, lack of equity and exclusion in the countries in relation to their respective development strategies. The salient aspects at the present time are the relation between democracy and economic growth, the effective capacity of the State and the role of planning.

24. As regards the concepts of creativity and autonomy, the Latin American and Caribbean countries are faced with the need to prepare their structures of production to deal with the new technologies applied in the countries of the centre. Among other consequences, these technologies will have a profound effect on the comparative advantages existing in international trade. In the context of the formation of a new international division of labour, the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean should make the very most of the opportunities for forming an alliance and increasing their degree of self-determination, both from the national and from the regional standpoint.

25. In these moments when, despite some advances, there are still pockets of conflict which seriously endanger the peace of the region, it is particularly urgent to make a supreme effort to create societies that will try to achieve co-operation among nations and regional integration, which will strive for the maintenance of peace and avoid the squandering of resources implicit in preparation for war. It should be remembered in this respect that the General Assembly has stressed the importance of the co-ordination and co-operation established among

/the preparatory

the preparatory measures for the International Year of Peace (1986) and the International Youth Year. It has also recognized the special role played by youth in the ideals of international peace and co-operation, and has underlined the important contribution that the concrete Programme of measures and activities undertaken in relation to the International Youth Year will make to the activities connected with youth in the framework of the International Year of Peace.4/

4. Corollaries for the application of the Regional Plan of Action at a time of crisis

26. When the Regional Plan of Action was adopted it was emphasized that both national strategies and national measures are the private concern of each country in accordance with its development plans and the economic, social and cultural systems which characterize it. The proposals for national action have merely an indicative value and were not conceived in terms of any particular country. Nonetheless, from the reading of the Plan a certain consensus emerges respecting the mechanisms required for the measures in favour of youth, and it is recognized that reciprocal commitments assumed by agreement would permit a better orientation of intra-regional co-operation in solving common problems and achieving regional and international support.

27. The reaffirmation of the validity of the development aims particularly associated with youth, of the need for specific social integration processes to achieve these aims, and of the types of action that should play an important role in the youth policies of the countries, when made in the present circumstances of economic and social crisis in the region, calls for the recognition of the need to harmonize goals and establish a certain priority in their fulfilment.

28. The achievement of social development depends, in part, on a determined economic growth. It is fundamental, however, that this should be accompanied by a correlative transformation of the social structures and of the procedures of political participation. In so far as the pattern of growth excludes important sectors of the population, modernization becomes superficial and precarious and fails to incorporate the efforts of a decisive part of society in favour of the process of integral development. At the same time, to reconcile the aims of development and of the criteria of social priority there must be institutionalized mechanisms to rank in order of priority the demands of the various social groups. It is crucial to find ways of ranking the demands, incorporating their content and satisfying them adequately so that they do not result in fronts of conflicts which will undermine the very process of development.

29. In view of the crisis, it is proposed that the Latin American and Caribbean countries should amplify the very narrow national margins for manoeuvre available to them for reorienting development. This basic imperative can best be expressed in giving the highest priority to measures which will augment their self-determination in respect of national economic and social policies. It is not a question of achieving autonomy at the expense of the development aims especially

/associated with

associated with youth that are underlined in the Regional Plan of Action, but rather of attempting to attain the goals of growth and equity, of innovation and the achievement of better modes of life, and of the personal and social fulfilment of individuals in a state of freedom and with full participation, through the perfecting of the national capacity for self-determination. A higher degree of self-determination would have a positive effect on the organization of the content and scope of policies and mechanisms aimed at the social integration of youth, since it would result in greater attention to the basic needs of the excluded majorities and the consolidation of democratization.

30. The aim of increasing the margin of manoeuvre at national and regional level through the reduction of dependence and external vulnerability is closely linked with the socio-political objectives of improving income distribution and advancing towards more pluralist and participative societies. At present the States not only have difficulty in using public expenditure as a mechanism of persuasion vis-à-vis the agents of production, but they face social demands increased by the overall loss of income attributable to the economic depression. Thus one of the few courses open to them is to seek new social consensuses; with these it would be possible to increase the degree of economic autonomy, incorporating different groups into a concerted process of formulation and taking of decisions.

31. An exercise in participation such as that described in the preceding paragraph should necessarily begin with youth. In the same order of ideas, it will be necessary to set up mechanisms to increase equity, both in the distribution of the burden of the economic recession and in the sharing of the benefits of a possible reactivation. The opportunities for action and the capacity to concert agreement vary according to the political régimes, socio-cultural traditions and institutional structure of each country, but in all cases there is a real possibility of making progress in fields in which more traditional methods merely create conflicts and social fragmentation. As youth is the part of society most open to change, it is here that the future social and cultural forms should be envisaged. It should be underlined in this respect that recently, in the subregions and countries of Latin America in which there are evident signs of the simultaneous structuring of the nation, the State and the social classes, and in which the challenges of underdevelopment signify above all ideological and political options, youth as a collective entity, or at least a number of juvenile sectors, have been assuming as part of the definition of the condition of youth, undertakings of social transformation.

/5. Proposed

5. Proposed measures complementary to the Plan of Action with regard to the crisis

a) General aspects

32. The measures detailed below form a set of proposals complementary to the Regional Plan of Action, based on consideration of the effects of the crisis on the various national societies and on youth. It should be recalled in this respect that the present crisis is the result, on the one hand, of the international economic situation and the economic policies applied by the countries and, on the other, of the prevailing styles of development which have not been able to ensure equity, participation or social innovation and have viewed consumerism as the main form of social gratification.

33. Since the critical economic situation of the region may well continue for a considerable time, it is worth noting that the crisis also represents a possibility of achieving social change based on the enormous creative potential of society, and especially of youth. In this respect, in order to fulfil the fundamental objectives of social development in the set of measures complementary to the Regional Plan of Action it is necessary:

a) To bear in mind that, quite independently of the crisis and prior to it, the Latin American societies sought to organize themselves in democratic social forms and to replace group confrontations with agreements on styles of development that would ensure growth, equity, and social efficiency or innovation.

b) To understand that policy experiments aimed at reaching agreements on the functioning of a democratic society or efforts to reach social agreement in order to face up to the challenges of development and change are manifestations of the search for another form of development involving social consensus.

c) To consider that, just as science foreshadowed the development of societies, innovative policies on youth can foreshadow the societies which it is desired to build.

d) To understand that the various indicators on the situation of youth in recent years raise two types of problems: i) how to reduce or eliminate the impact of the crisis on education, employment, formation of the family, cultural expression, etc.; ii) how to promote forms of identification of youth with basic social institutions such as education, work and the democratic political system.

e) To consider that the various forms of identification of young people do not derive from actions of mobilization on the part of the State, but from the creation of social spaces and material conditions which make possible the autonomous and participative action of young people themselves.

f) To understand that the process of building participative societies presupposes the recognition of different types of religions, ways of thinking, political orientations and conceptions of the future of society, and these

/differences must

differences must be respected and harmonized in the definition of development. Such respect for different approaches must prevail in relations among nations for preserving peace, which is the greatest ethical achievement of civilizations and a fundamental condition for the development of peoples. The acceptance of the idea of a variety of possible orientations implies the rejection of violence both in connection with domestic discrepancies and external differences.

i. Sensitization action

34. The concept of sensitization action presented in the Regional Plan of Action acquires a special dimension in the present circumstances. The natural tendency of any society in crisis conditions is to preserve the positions occupied by adults and concentrate decisions in experienced and restricted groups or nuclei, considering that this safeguards efficiency. Both mechanisms tend to displace young people: on the one hand, their incorporation into social and occupational positions which permit them to act as young adults is postponed, and on the other they are kept out of the process of decision-making at the level of trade unions, parties, community and cultural organizations, etc. If a vigorous proposal aimed at incorporating young people and promoting participative and democratic practices is to receive the support of the societies, many types of action to sensitize public opinion must be carried out.

35. It is vital that Latin America and the Caribbean should become aware of the great challenge represented by the rapidity and effectiveness with which the central countries have carried out a process of scientific and technological restructuring. These changes have already had enormous and significant penetration in industrial production and even in everyday social life, and constitute the basis for the comparative advantages of the future at the international level. The new scientific and technological base will not only have projections as regards the place of the region in world trade but also, and what is even more important, as regards the forms of production and organization of its own societies. The countries of Latin America and the Caribbean must make a large-scale effort, through ongoing sensitization activities, to create an awareness of the need to plan the development and training of young people as an investment for achieving greater scientific and technological development. In this respect, changes in systems of education and mass communication media must be promoted with a view to raising the social value placed on domestic technological innovation, while at the same time expanding and disseminating information on world scientific and technological progress. There is a broad field for regional co-operation initiatives in respect of these activities.

36. The three main topics of the International Youth Year --participation, development, peace-- are intimately interrelated. In the present circumstances, however, an issue which assumes special importance is that of peace, both between nations and within each one of them. It has therefore been considered desirable to lay particular stress on the sensitization action provided for in the Regional Plan of Action and the renewal of the mutual commitment assumed there by the countries. The numerous sensitization activities listed in the Plan of Action

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for the International Youth Year could be extended in time in order to ensure that they are fully integrated into the long-term national strategies. Finally, close co-ordination and co-operation must be established between the activities carried out on behalf of peace within the framework of the Regional Plan of Action and the activities planned for the International Year of Peace. Thus, steps must be taken to promote dialogue and an exchange of ideas among young people regarding the value of peace and human rights, as well as on the importance of dialogue and negotiation as the most suitable ways of settling conflicts. In this respect, and especially in view of the regional situation, support should be given to the efforts on behalf of peace being carried out by the Contadora Group, and the continuation of this task should be encouraged, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 39/4 adopted by consensus on 26 october 1984.

ii. Substantive decisions

37. This section concerns measures taken at the legislative, legal, organizational and financial levels with a view to laying down permanent policies. These policies must serve as the framework for decisions whose specific content at the local and national level will be defined in the light of the needs and aspirations of youth, the experience collected in pilot projects, and the corrections which it may be necessary to make in the course of time in view of changes in economic and social situations. It is a matter of priority, as stated in the Regional Plan of Action, that policies on youth should be integrated into the policies affecting the different spheres of national life. Thus, for example, it is necessary to link the changes made in rural social organization with the organization of new economic and social forms for rural youth, and it is necessary that general policies, such as those concerned with employment or housing, should be linked with training programmes for young people and measures giving access to suitable dwellings to young couples, and that policies designed to give support to small and medium-scale enterprises should be linked with programmes to facilitate the establishment of individual or collective enterprises by young people.

38. For the full integration of policies and programmes for youth into national development, it is necessary that, in accordance with the circumstances and priorities of each country, national development plans should organically incorporate in each appropriate sector the global objectives, specific goals and forms of operation regarding youth and their participation in society.

b) Action at the national level

39. Although the selection and application of types of action in specific sectors and for each particular category of young people is the responsibility of each country, and consequently the combination of measures adopted will vary according to the national situation and the countries' priorities, some types of action can be described which should play an important role in the overall set of policies and programmes for youth in almost all the countries of the region.

40. In this respect, these complementary guidelines to the Regional Plan of Action have been designed to improve the Plan's capacity to respond to the

/fundamental problems

fundamental problems of youth at the present time. The types of action described do not pretend to represent an exhaustive list of the great variety of possible measures, but are rather an illustration of some priority options which could be taken in co-ordination with the general lines of the strategy and the set of substantive and instrumental actions which are to be carried out in a continuous and ongoing manner during the third stage of the Regional Plan of Action. They are divided into two fundamental types of activity and one support methodology.

41. In the first place, the existence of spaces for the free social organization of young people must be promoted through action to further the participation of young people and create communication between social groups of young persons of different strata and social subcultures with a view to sharing codes of communication, recognizing social differences and inequalities, and promoting collective solidarity. To this end, actions such as the following could be carried out:

a) Promoting the establishment of practices of democratic organization in the various youth groups and facilitating the participation of young people in the organization and running of educational centres, in keeping with their age and level of knowledge.

b) Promoting the active participation of young people in some areas where they are currently only the passive objects of the action of adults, through governmental and non-governmental institutions. In accordance with national circumstances, consideration should be given to: i) the place and role which correspond to young people in society and the responsibility of society vis-à-vis youth; ii) the decentralized co-ordination machinery whereby governmental and non-governmental institutions and youth representatives can participate in the formulation and application of policies on youth; iii) means for bringing together young people so that they can express their needs and aspirations, participate in decisions affecting them, and organize their own activities.

c) Facilitating the formulation of proposals and projects by young people with regard to the present situation and future evolution of societies. This action would call for consideration of the reorientation of the normative policies of governmental and non-governmental sectors so that youth may occupy the place which corresponds to it in all aspects of national development, not just as a beneficiary but also as a creative and participating force.

d) Facilitating the organization of young people in social circles where there is no tradition in this respect. This is of particularly high priority with regard to low-level indigenous rural groups and urban marginal groups, especially in the case of women, and involves the general promotion of intermediate and autonomous social organizations in the space between civil society and the State.

e) Facilitating the gaining of experience in social and economic organization by young people through co-operative production, self-management or community organization, with a view to developing participation and seeking alternative development styles.

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42. A second type of action would be aimed at favouring specific policies to serve as a response to the social effects of the crisis, which has been reflected in increases in child and juvenile economic activity, an increase in the rate of unemployment among economically active young people, and higher school dropout rates. These actions should simultaneously seek to promote capacities and conditions for a different form of development. Among them are the following:

a) Analysing the characteristics of the young people who enter the labour market at an early age and promoting policies which, with the necessary support, delay such an early type of incorporation (which blocks the young people's future training and labour career) and make it possible to orient these young people towards educational or vocational training centres.

b) Analysing the situation of young unemployed persons and, once information has been obtained in this respect, establishing general employment policies which correct the serious problem of exclusion represented by the high rates of unemployment.

c) Considering the condition of "forced youth" imposed by unemployment, as a point of support for policies designed to make positive use of the "free" time of young people in order to make good their educational shortcomings. This action would require the expansion and improvement of the educational, technical training and vocational training services to serve the young people who have been marginated from them. It should include non-formal education and activities directed both towards the juvenile bases and the mass communication media.

d) Stressing the vital importance of achieving true effective universal primary education or, in the countries which have already fulfilled this objective, secondary education. This measure is of fundamental importance for the social integration and participation of young people from rural and popular urban social sectors. In some countries where cultural traditions stand in the way of greater education of women, it will be necessary to seek greater equality between the sexes. It must be borne in mind that these services must not only be extended, but also be adequate in quality and content. These activities must not only be viewed from the point of view of training young people qualified for the labour markets of the present and the future, but must also be seen as a way of giving young people the opportunity to secure full integration into civil life. Thus, they can become an effective way of expanding the capacity of participation of young people and raising the level of their role as agents and protagonists of social change. Obviously, this calls for a variety of forms of support and economic and social stimulation.

e) Formulating programmes of work and study which promote a better distribution of the jobs and working hours which will be created, but which will be limited to start with. This type of measures will make it possible to carry out general educational programmes and programmes of training in the new techniques linked with technological modernization.

/f) Reappraising

f) Reappraising the orientation of the programmes of study in night primary and secondary schools in order to fit them better to the educational needs of young people who have left the day schools and entered the labour force, while at the same time considering the creation of centres of educational attention in areas of popular settlements which would enable young people to continue studying after they have begun to work.

g) Furthering the progressive adaptation of the content of education to the growing demands of development. Among these demands are those deriving from the development of biology, physics, chemistry and mathematics and their growing application to production and social life. In this respect, it is important not to overlook information processing, computation, biotechnology and other scientific activities which are revolutionizing industry and society. A considerable advance in the scientific content of education is essential; otherwise, Latin America and the Caribbean will lag far behind with the advance of the frontier of knowledge in the developed countries. Furthermore, science and technology, quite apart from their importance for production and employment, are of fundamental significance for the formation of values and attitudes. In many countries, they have been considered as mere instruments or as forms of knowledge which are only relevant to a very limited sector of society; in reality, however, they represent forms of thinking which should be opened to the various strata of youth. "Scientific illiteracy" will have much more serious consequences in terms of social exclusion in the near future than in the past.

h) Taking into account the importance of knowledge of human sciences, both because they create the capacity to understand national, regional and universal society and because they develop a critical capacity which lies at the base of the recognition of the historical nature of all forms of social organization, and hence of the permanent renovation of those forms.

i) Promoting activities to further solidarity among young students and young rural, indigenous or underprivileged urban groups, thus helping the former to gain awareness of the problems of the others, while enabling young people from the underprivileged groups to have a chance to create their own specific forms of youth organization and expression. Among such activities, special mention may be made of programmes of the "young people educate young people" type, which mobilize the more educated strata to help in the training of the less educated.

j) Considering, in the light of the experience of the developed countries, programmes of employment of social significance, with payment of a subsistence allowance, in order to establish regular action of social and cultural interest such as basic health attention, preschool attention, organization and running of cultural centres, co-ordination of co-operative projects, etc.

k) Reactivating viable manufacturing sectors producing basic consumer goods and others which offer comparative advantages, and exploring the possibility of integral industrialization through the application of appropriate technologies to the use of agricultural, forestry and fishery resources. This action should be viewed not only as a way of securing the global reactivation of the production structure of the region, but also as a way of expanding the range of employment opportunities open to young people.

/1) Promoting

l) Promoting co-operative enterprises of young people in the agricultural, industrial and services sectors, with adequate financial and technical support, as a way of increasing employment and establishing communal and democratic management mechanisms in economic activities.

m) Providing adequate information services on trends in the labour market for young people and helping them, through employment services, to obtain jobs.

43. In view of the changing regional situation, the little that is known of many processes affecting youth, and the uncertainty over the future, the support methodology for the actions suggested in the paragraphs above should be based on capacity for the provision of regular information on conditions in the areas of education, work, family formation, state of physical and psychological health, etc., of young people. Furthermore, there should be suitably trained departments for appraising the participation programmes carried out by non-governmental organizations or inspired by government policies. The development of a suitable programme of statistics and analysis is essential in order to be able to periodically evaluate the results of policies and programmes for youth and establish a dynamic and permanent system for formulating and effecting adjustment proposals.

c) Action at the regional level

44. The programme of action at the regional level is mainly conceived as a form of support for national activities and for exchange and co-operation among countries for the application of the strategy contained in the Regional Plan of Action.

45. Depending on the resources available, and within the framework of the work programme in the area of social development, ECLAC could:

a) Continue to carry out work designed to fulfil the goals and objectives laid down in the Regional Plan of Action, in collaboration with the agencies of the United Nations system and through co-operation agreements with regional intergovernmental bodies, subregional bodies, the member countries of ECLAC and non-governmental organizations.

b) Give technical support to the countries, at the request of governments, in the execution of activities designed to increase the capacity of governments to develop, strengthen and evaluate their policies and programmes for youth.

c) Continue the execution of national diagnoses on the situation, prospects and needs of youth, as well as on specific topics such as the social conditions of specific categories and groups of young people, employment and youth, education and training, health, expectations and projects for the future, young women, and the legal situation of young people. These studies should be action-oriented and should be widely disseminated among the countries. In carrying out such studies, co-operation with national and regional research institutes and organizations should be stimulated in order to promote activities aimed at analysing the area of youth.

/d) Emphasize

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d) Emphasize the need to improve statistical information and other forms of knowledge of youth, especially as regards education, employment, health, family formation and housing, with the aim of creating a data base which will permit the timely analysis of information so as to be able to appraise and improve the policies and programmes regarding youth.

e) Hold regional and technical seminars on questions and problems relating to youth with the aim of preparing specific action-oriented recommendations.

f) Prepare and deliver courses on problems, programmes and policies concerning youth.

g) Organize exchanges between countries in relation to experience and knowledge of the problems of youth, and stimulate forms of international voluntary service by young people.

h) Organize horizontal co-operation between countries in activities related to youth, at both the governmental and non-governmental level.

i) Continue activities which place the topic of youth in the perspective of alternative styles of development for the region and the achievement of the objectives of equity, participation, peace, and development of the potential of young people.

Notes

1/ In the period following the Latin American Regional Preparatory Meeting for the International Youth Year, the ECLAC Secretariat prepared a number of documents which are listed and summarized in document LC/L.343(Conf.78/4), entitled "International Youth Year: ECLAC activities in fulfiment of the Regional Plan of Action". The study of these documents and the execution of other work by the Secretariat made possible the preparation of document LC/L.344(Conf.78/3) entitled "Latin American youth at a time of change and crisis", which updates some aspects of the diagnosis prepared for the regional meeting mentioned earlier.

2/ See the studies presented at the Expert Meeting on Crisis and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean, held at ECLAC Headquarters from 29 April to 3 May 1985, especially document LC/L.333, "Crisis and development: the present situation and future prospects of Latin America and the Caribbean".

3/ See document LC/L.344, op. cit.

4/ See General Assembly resolution 39/10 on the International Year of Peace.